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ELAB

SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA 2009 ANNUAL REPORT ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

REF: 08 SECSTATE 132759

SUMMARY

1A. The Government of Slovakia has upped its game in the fight against Trafficking in Persons (TIP.) In addition to maintaining the Anti-TIP program budget of 8 million Slovak Crowns (approximately \$400,000) per year, the Government of Slovakia (GOS) has increased both transparency and stakeholder collaboration in its anti-TIP activities. The GOS and NGOs work collaboratively on implementation of the GOS's 2008-2010 National Program for the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons (National Program.) Internationally, the GOS continues to commit itself to anti-TIP protocols.

During the myriad interviews we conducted for this report, and our participation in the annual intergovernmental Expert Group meeting, we observed first-hand the improvement in the GOS cooperation with NGOs, mostly on the part of the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) and particularly from the office of the TIP National Coordinator, which has developed genuine rapport with NGOs working on victims assistance and prevention campaigns. Indeed, some NGOs said they feel that Slovakia has surpassed its neighbors in the fight against TIP.

However, deficiencies in the judicial sector continue to hamper the GOS's complete fulfillment of the minimum standards of trafficking. A continued focus on training border police, national police, as well as the prosecutors and judges who must put the laws to the test in the courtroom will be essential if the GOS wants to take its game to the next level.

1B. Answers below are keyed to section and paragraph numbers in reftel. Embassy Bratislava point of contact is:

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1C. Total time to complete TIP report:

FSNs: 30
FS03: 50
FS02: 3

11. SLOVAKIA'S TIP SITUATION

1A. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The MOI, local police, NGOs, and IOM are the best sources of information regarding the number and kinds of TIP victims. Though the numbers vary from source to source, they are generally reliable. IOM estimates between 150 to 200 individuals are trafficked each

year. During the reporting period, IOM assisted 17 victims of trafficking and no foreign victims; 9 of these victims were assisted under the National Program. The NGO Dotyk assisted 20 victims of trafficking, 8 of whom were assisted under the National Program. The police initiated investigation into 13 TIP cases during the reporting period.

1B. COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND TRANSIT

Slovakia is considered a transit and a source country for trafficking in persons. The International Office for Migration (IOM) states that due to the small number of known victims who are third country nationals or those trafficked only within Slovak borders, the country cannot be classified as a destination country, though IOM and the government both acknowledge that some women may be forced to work briefly in Slovakia while in transit to their final destinations in Western Europe.

1C. TIP ROUTES

According to NGOs, most of the victims trafficked through Slovakia continue to come from the former Soviet Republics (especially Moldova and Ukraine), Bulgaria, the Baltics, the Balkans and China, and are trafficked to the Czech Republic, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Spain, Croatia, and Slovenia. However, no foreign victims were identified by Slovak police or NGOs during the reporting period. Slovak victims usually come from economically depressed regions of Slovakia with high levels of unemployment. Often, these women are Roma.

1D. VICTIM PROFILES

Victims who have been returned to Slovakia are usually young females

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in their late teens or early 20s. Many report being trafficked after accepting offers from relatives, acquaintances, or unlicensed agencies to arrange for work abroad. Some consciously enter into prostitution only to become trafficked at a later date. Because they are willing participants (at first) the victims tend to be transported to their destination country on public transportation with no resistance.

1E. PERPETRATORS

According to police, as well as the testimony of some victims and offenders, trafficking in Slovakia is usually an organized criminal activity. Small-scale Slovak perpetrators feed victims into larger international syndicates at their destinations. Organized trafficking groups consist of Germans, Czechs, Russians, Ukrainians, Albanians, Italians, Macedonians, Poles, or Slovenes.

Male and female Slovak traffickers usually have prior knowledge and direct experience in the sex industry in Western Europe. They typically utilize employment or hostess agency schemes, but also rely on personal connections with women.

Roma victims, in particular, are likely to know their traffickers. Some Roma women enter into prostitution knowingly, fleeing the conditions of an abusive home or poor living conditions in a Roma settlement (or shantytown), and become victims of trafficking in the destination country. We also heard from NGOs that several of the Roma victims assisted during the year are mentally handicapped.

Roma activists suggest an increase in the trafficking of Roma children for begging. According to a Roma NGO, the practice is highly organized. Traffickers from within the Roma community send children (either by themselves or with their mothers or other women) by bus to Austria, Italy and Germany to work the streets. Traffickers then withhold the victims' identity papers in order to keep them from escaping.

12. SETTING THE SCENE FOR GOS ANTI-TIP EFFORTS

1A. RECOGNITION OF A PROBLEM

Yes, the Government acknowledges that TIP is a problem in Slovakia.

1B. INVOLVED AGENCIES

The MOI State Secretary, Vladimir Cecot, has since 2007 been the National Coordinator for anti-TIP activities and presides over the Expert Group. Cecot has demonstrated a sustained commitment to upgrading the GOS efforts to combat TIP. Cecot again chaired the GOS Interagency TIP Expert Group meeting in December 2008 to discuss implementation progress on the 2008-2010 National Action Plan. The Director of the MOI's Department of Security Strategies is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the Expert Group and oversees the implementation of the National Program. This includes drafting the update of the National Program, organizing inter-agency cooperation, tracking TIP statistics, distributing funds for anti-TIP projects, and working with NGOs to develop those projects. In addition to the Expert Group, some prevention activities are coordinated by the working group established within the Government Council for Crime Prevention. Other ministries that advise MOI on TIP include the Ministries of Justice, Education, Finance, Health, Labor and Social Affairs, and Foreign Affairs, as well as the General Prosecutor's Office.

Falling under the Police Anti-Organized Crime Bureau, the Police Anti-Trafficking Unit, which has 10 dedicated officers, coordinates most activity regarding trafficking both within Slovakia and with INTERPOL; members of the unit have traveled overseas to participate in seminars and training. The unit documents and investigates crimes, monitors known places of prostitution, investigates suspicious travel or employment schemes, and contributes to public awareness by giving presentations at conferences and conducting training.

The Border and Alien police are responsible for monitoring border crossings for evidence of trafficking, with the customs directorate and the MFA also playing a role.

The Equal Opportunity Office at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOL) supports NGO activity through grants, manages the implementation of international protocols regarding worker's rights, and works to reduce violence against women.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) coordinates with IOM to bring TIP awareness discussions into high school classrooms.

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The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) is responsible for strengthening safeguards for victim protection.

The General Prosecutor is responsible for the prosecution of traffickers.

1C. GOVERNMENT LIMITATIONS

The National Program established the National Coordinator's 2008 budget to fight trafficking at approximately \$400,000; in 2009 the budget is roughly the same amount. Anti-TIP police remain funded at past levels, supporting 10 officers at the national police headquarters. Overall, government corruption is not a significant problem for trafficking in persons. NGOs report that they believe government resources devoted to anti-TIP efforts are sufficient, and in fact more generous than many other European countries, especially in the area of victim's assistance. Lack of awareness of how to identify victims and how to effectively investigate and assemble cases amongst practitioners remains the greatest limitation, though the GOS is making substantial efforts to address this.

1D. GOVERNMENT SELF-MONITORING

The MOI provides internal assessments and baseline information regarding the nature of trafficking in Slovakia. The National Program for 2008-2010 contains an assessment of the Program's performance during the 2007 reporting period. Further, the UNODC and the MOI conducted a joint research project to evaluate how efficient Slovakia's TIP programs have been. The UNODC presented

and distributed its report to the interagency Expert Working Group in December 2008, after it had been thoroughly vetted and cleared by the GOS.

13. INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF TRAFFICKERS

1A. EXISTING LAWS AGAINST TIP

TIP is defined and criminalized through Section 179 in the Criminal Code. Trafficking in children is a separate crime, covered by sections 180 and 181. Other related legislation includes: Section 367 on Procurement (Pimping), Section 208 on torture of a close person or person in one's charge, Section 371 on endangering morality. The law states explicitly the extra-territorial nature of this crime and acknowledge that the crime also entails fraudulent means, violence, threat, or other forms of coercion to elicit agreement from a victim older than 18 years (for section 179) for the crime of trafficking. These laws are being used in trafficking cases and adequately cover the full scope of trafficking. Slovak law allows a renewable 40-day "tolerated stay" status for foreign victims of serious crimes, including trafficking in persons.

On January 30, 2007, Slovakia signed the Council of Europe's (COE) Convention of 2005 on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. It ratified the document on March 27, 2007. The Convention was subsequently entered into force on February 1, 2008. It is a comprehensive treaty, focusing mainly on the protection of trafficking victims and safeguarding their rights. It also aims to prevent trafficking and to prosecute traffickers. The Convention applies to all forms of trafficking, whether national or international, and whether related to organized crime. It applies to men, women and children equally, whatever the form of exploitation (labor or sex acts). The Convention provides a mechanism to guarantee each signatory's compliance with its provisions. Significantly, Slovakia is one of only 14 COE countries that have ratified this Convention.

In the past several years, Parliament has amended and ratified other relevant trafficking legislation to conform to EU directives and UN requirements, such as the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. In 2006, Parliament passed a law on victim assistance requiring police to provide victims of any crime information on organizations that can help them.

The country participates in all EU structures and working groups in the field of justice and home affairs that seek to monitor and control trafficking in persons.

1B. PUNISHMENT OF SEX TRAFFICKING OFFENSES

The GOS increased the minimum sentences for trafficking in 2006. The provision on trafficking (both for the purpose of sexual and labor exploitation) states that any person, who entices, enlists, transfers or receives another person to or from abroad with the intention to engage such person in sexual intercourse or exploitation is liable to a term of imprisonment of four to ten

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years. A four-to-ten year sentence is also applicable to a person who exploits another person through forced labor, involuntary servitude, slavery, or other similar forms of exploitation. The penalty increases to a 7-to-12 year prison term if a) the perpetrator gains considerable profit, b) the offense is committed against a protected person, c) the offense is committed with a special motive, or d) the offense is committed in conjunction with another grave illegal activity, such as organized crime. The penalty increases to 12-to-20 years if a) the perpetrator gains extensive profit, b) the offender causes serious bodily harm or death or other extraordinarily serious effect, or c) the offense is committed as a member of a dangerous group. Lastly, a term of 20-to-25 years can be applied if the perpetrator gains large-scale profit or causes serious bodily harm to or the death of multiple persons.

The Ministry of Justice reported that six out of the seven sex traffickers convicted in 2007 received suspended sentences. Only one

received jail time. There were no updated statistics available for 2008 at the time this report was submitted. Post will provide septel when they are available.

I.C. PUNISHMENT OF LABOR TRAFFICKING OFFENSES

The penalty for trafficking for labor exploitation is the same as for trafficking for sexual exploitation.

There were no convictions of labor traffickers during the reporting period. The police determined that a group of eight Vietnamese nationals found working in a Bratislava-area cigarette factory that post reported on last year were not trafficked. However, the police initiated a different investigation into a group of Romanians suspected of being victims of forced labor. The Slovak police are working with the Romanian police, as the alleged perpetrator is being investigated for TIP in Romania.

I.D. PENALTIES FOR RAPE

The range of sentencing for rape is five-to-ten years' imprisonment and could be increased to 7-to-15 years depending on the age of the victim or whether violence was used. The sentence may be further increased to 15-to-20 years if the act results in serious bodily harm, and 20-to-25 years if the perpetrator causes the death of the victim or the crime is committed in a crisis situation. The penalties for rape are on par with penalties for trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.

I.E. INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF TRAFFICKERS

The government actively investigates cases of trafficking through the specialized anti-trafficking unit at Police Headquarters in Bratislava. The anti-TIP unit first conducts a preliminary investigation, then assists local police officials directly involved with the case, or assists investigators from the Bureau for Organized Crime if the case involves organized crime or has international implications. The police conduct inspections of suspected places of prostitution, and monitor internet sites.

At the regional level, TIP is investigated by four specialized officers (two in the city of Zilina, one in the city of Trnava, and one in the city of Kosice) who have experience in related crimes, such as pimping, rape and other sexual violence.

Slovakia criminally prosecutes labor recruiters who use false or deceptive offers of employment, or who confiscate employee's passports. Articles 179, 181-184 and Article 241 of the anti-TIP law are used to prosecute such cases.

The Slovak criminal code allows for the possibility of parole after an inmate serves two-thirds of his or her sentence. In the case of a serious crime (with a sentence of more than 8 years) courts can grant parole only after three-fourths of the sentence is served. In the case of a life sentence, the court can ban parole completely, or grant it after 25 years served.

According to official statistics, police investigated 13 cases of trafficking during the reporting period. 12 perpetrators were identified, 9 were men and 3 were women. According to police, all of these cases concerned sex trafficking, and 16 victims were identified. There were no cases of trafficking of children during the reporting period.

One of the few prosecutors with TIP experience lamented the low number of complex investigations, and said he believes the police Anti-trafficking unit is not able to assemble sufficient evidence for strong cases in the courts. He said he believes this is because they spend much of their time responding to legal assistance

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requests from other countries (which are very time consuming due to the language barriers), and because they do not have a specialized anti-TIP investigator on their team.

I.G. TRAINING

The 10 officers in the Police Anti-trafficking unit located in Bratislava were fully trained in TIP, and often participate in international trainings. All police districts have at least one officer who receives at least some additional instruction and, among his/her other duties, serves as a point of contact with the Anti-trafficking unit. Under the National Program, over 160 police officers were trained in victim identification during the reporting period, often by IOM, and occasionally in joint sessions with regional social and religious workers.

With funding from the National Program, IOM trained 369 individuals in victim identification and prevention in 2008. Participants included Roma community social workers, street workers, police investigators, prosecutors, psychologists and social workers, and custody and child protection services. IOM also conducted a specialized training for 30 Slovak nuns, in cooperation with IOM Rome and financial support from U.S. Embassy Bratislava.

In 2007, the MOI published a training manual aimed at police officers. The manual defined TIP, explained how to identify victims, and how to refer those victims to appropriate assistance programs. It also listed extensive contact information that police can utilize, including names and phone numbers for the MOI, Anti-TIP police in Bratislava, and several NGOs.

However, NGOs and the GOS agree that still more training is necessary, especially for border police, prosecutors, judges, and Roma community social workers in Eastern Slovakia. According to IOM, the government has agreed to fund additional training for border guards, who have been receptive in 2008 trainings but need additional follow-on training, as they have very limited time on the border to identify victims.

IG. INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

The GOS cooperates with foreign governments in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases. The police Anti-trafficking unit explained that most trafficking cases require an international investigation. Slovak Embassies have a police attache who assists with joint investigations. Many international investigations occur in the framework of Interpol and Europol. The Anti-trafficking unit notes that the lack of English language ability among Slovak police sometimes limits investigations, yet the unit also reported increased cooperation with British authorities during the reporting period, and highlighted the case of a Slovak man convicted in the U.K. of TIP with evidence collected in Slovakia.

The MOI, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hosted a conference in Bratislava, March 31 - April 1, 2008, with a focus on the international face of TIP. Representatives from the U.S Embassy, EU, UNODC, IOM, V-4 countries (Hungary, Czech Republic, and Poland), Austria, and Ukraine participated.

In January 2009, the Ministry of Interior announced the establishment of an International TIP Information Center, in Kosice, eastern Slovakia. The MOI has devoted 55,000 Euro to the center, which is designed to centralize the collection of TIP-related data for Slovakia, and to encourage international cooperation and facilitate information sharing with neighboring countries. This funding was provided by the GOS after MOI lobbied to have the center included in a amendment to the Prevention of Criminality law passed in 2008.

IH. EXTRADITION

Based on the Law on Criminal Court Procedures, Slovakia can extradite persons for any crime with a corresponding sentence longer than one year, except a crime political in nature. Slovak citizens can only be extradited when governed by a treaty signed by Slovakia. The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime allows for Slovakia to extradite traffickers. Slovakia has a bilateral extradition agreement with the U.S. which allows for the extradition of non-Slovaks to the United States.

II. GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN TRAFFICKING

There is no evidence of governmental involvement in or tolerance of

trafficking. Despite governmental efforts to combat petty corruption on the borders and among police, the problem still exists. However, the criminal activities of these individuals do

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not reflect institutional acceptance on a local or national level.

IJ. STEPS TO END GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN TRAFFICKING

According to police and NGOs, there were no cases of government officials involved in trafficking.

IK. PROSTITUTION

Prostitution is neither illegal nor legal in Slovakia, nor is it regulated. The Criminal Code prohibits pimping activities, including coercing or taking advantage of or gaining from the prostitution of others. Sentences range from one to 15 years depending on the age of the victim, method in which the crime was committed, whether organized crime was involved, and whether the crime resulted in bodily harm or death. If the offense involves children under the age of 15 or between 15 and 18, the Criminal Code adds three-to-ten and seven-to-twelve years to the sentences respectively. Because prostitution is not regulated, there is no minimum age at which a person may legally choose to be a prostitute.

However, the minimum age of consensual sex is 15. Sex with a minor aged 14 or younger is considered statutory rape regardless of the circumstances. Local governments can prohibit the offer of sexual services in public places and offenders can be fined.

IL. INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF NATIONALS DEPLOYED ABROAD

During the reporting period, Slovakia did not report any cases of trafficking involving nationals deployed abroad.

IM. CHILD SEX TOURISM

Slovakia is not identified as a destination for child sex tourism. The trafficking in children law, like the trafficking in persons law, reflects extraterritoriality.

I4. PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS

IA. PROTECTION FOR VICTIMS AND WITNESSES

The government provides witness protection for victims, based upon a decision by an inter-ministerial committee. NGOs, through their victim assistance grants, provide protection for victims housed in their shelters by the use of a private security firm. Other witness protection measures include recorded testimony or testimony through video connection, which is now mandatory for minors. Another law explicitly states that the victim and perpetrator must be kept separate during the judicial procedure, thus requiring video testimony for most current trafficking cases. Outside of the witness protection program, MOI will fund up to 40 days of care for victims, including any services deemed necessary on an individual basis. According to the MOI, juvenile victims are housed separately from adult victims.

Slovak law provides for a renewable 40-day "tolerated stay" for foreign victims of serious crimes, including trafficking in persons. This status gives the victim the right to work. In addition to the "tolerated stay" law, Slovak authorities are required to postpone deportation of any third-country national who seeks to enter a witness protection program or who claims asylum, thus providing temporary residency status.

IOM and Dotyk receive GOS funding from the National Program to provide specialized victims' assistance program exclusively for repatriated Slovaks, or internally trafficked Slovaks. The victim's assistance program provides financial support for at least 90 days (and is often repeatedly extended, according to NGOs), and includes three phases: crisis intervention, protection of victims, and reintegration. According to IOM, the situation in Slovakia has improved dramatically in recent years. The focus on increased

victims support - including legal, psychological, medical, and social assistance - by the competent government Ministries has increased the country's capacity to help victims and encouraged returning victims to seek assistance.

I.B. VICTIM CARE FACILITIES

Access to legal, medical, and psychological services for victims (both foreign and domestic) were vital elements of Slovakia's National Program. The government provides dedicated shelters through its NGO programs. The MOI signed five cooperative agreements with NGOs (IOM, Dotyk, Slovak Caritas, Prima (an NGO that works with streetworkers) in 2008, providing funding levels of approximately USD 220,000. Two of these NGOs, IOM and Dotyk, provided shelter for TIP victims. There are no specialized facilities for male victims

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of TIP. Child TIP victims are by law cared for by the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family, but there were none identified during the year.

During the reporting period, NGO's assisted approximately 37 trafficking victims. IOM assisted 17 victims of trafficking; 9 of these victims were assisted under the National Program. Dotyk assisted 20 victims of trafficking, 8 of whom were assisted in the National Program.

I.D. PROVISIONS FOR FOREIGN TIP VICTIMS

Slovak law provides for a renewable 40-day "tolerated stay" for foreign victims of serious crimes, including trafficking in persons. This status gives the victim the right to work. In addition to the "tolerated stay" law, Slovak authorities are required to postpone deportation of any third-country national who seeks to enter a witness protection program or who claims asylum, thus providing temporary residency status. Foreign victims are also eligible for the shelter and social assistance provided by the National Program. However, these measures were not put in practice during the reporting period as there were no foreign victims identified.

I.E. LONG TERM SHELTER

NGOs reported in practice that the government resources devoted to assisting TIP victims were quite generous. Victims participating in the National Program were able to stay in state-funded shelters and rehabilitation programs for as long as their cases were ongoing, and these cases often take years.

I.F. NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISM

The Expert Working Group adopted a National Referral Mechanism in December 2008. This provides a standard operating procedure throughout the country for law enforcement practitioners who suspect they have come into contact with a trafficking victim, and enables them to reach out to the most readily available state and NGO resources to assist the victim. The National Referral Mechanism is posted on the MOI website, where it is also available to the public.

I.G. TOTAL NUMBER OF VICTIMS

As mentioned previously, NGOs assisted 37 victims during the year.

I.H. IDENTIFYING AND REFERRING VICTIMS

During the reporting period, police identified and referred 16 TIP victims to NGOs, based on a law requiring authorities to provide information about organizations offering support services to potential victims. The Anti-trafficking unit screens and refers victims who are actively participating in the investigation process or witness protection.

I.I. RIGHTS OF VICTIMS

When an individual is identified as a trafficking victim, the victim's rights are respected and he or she does not face fines or

jail sentences. However, it has been reported that unidentified victims have been treated as illegal migrants or prostitutes and have been detained or deported.

IJ. INVESTIGATION

The National Program encourages victims to participate in cases against their traffickers. 17 victims participated in such cases during the year, according to the police. Victims may file civil suits against their traffickers in addition to criminal charges. Slovakia also has a victim's compensation law that allows for a one-time reimbursement for victims of violent crime, paid by the Ministry of Justice.

IK. TRAINING FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

During the reporting period, the MOI -- in cooperation with IOM and other NGOs --provided training to over 400 law enforcement officers and community social workers. The training included how to communicate with victims, victim assistance, and general information about TIP. TIP is also included in the human rights curriculum at the Police Academy. Lastly, the MOL educated local governments, central government branches and law enforcement agencies on trafficking and victim assistance. Slovak missions abroad provide travel documents, assistance with money transfers, contacting relatives, arranging services, and travel home. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs helps refer repatriated victims to NGOs for

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assistance, and IOM reported that the MFA helped repatriate at least 3 victims during the reporting period. IOM also worked with the Slovak MFA to develop a standard operating procedure for Embassies abroad, and reported especially smooth cooperation with Slovak Embassies in Germany and the U.K.

IL. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

The MOI-funded assistance through the National Program is available to repatriated Slovak citizens as well as foreign victims identified in Slovakia, though during the reporting period, no foreign victims were assisted.

IM. NGO ASSISTANCE

Most NGOs aiding trafficking victims in Slovakia are domestic, although they may have loose cooperation agreements with NGOs abroad. Some of these Slovak NGOs are: the Alliance of Women, Dafne, Dotyk, Prima, Storm, Slovak Caritas, the Cultural Association of Roma in Slovakia, and Victims' Support Slovakia. They provide a wide range of services, from preventive awareness education and identifying victims to arranging for repatriation transport to post-trafficking needs such as medical, mental health, legal, and protective services, and work re-training courses.

In 2008, NGOs received approximately USD 227,000 from the GOS for Anti-TIP programs.

15. PREVENTION

IA. ANTI-TRAFFICKING CAMPAIGNS

Government officials and agencies cooperated with NGOs on anti-trafficking information and education campaigns, targeting potential trafficking victims, but also educating local government workers, teachers, students, community centers, journalists, local police, and the border and alien police.

The GOS funded part of a public-private partnership for a national TIP hotline. Under this agreement, the telephone company T-Mobile provides the phone line free of charge, and IOM staff (paid for through the National Program) man the phone lines. From June to December 2008, the phone line received 1272 phone calls, in which it provided counseling services to 120 clients, and identified three trafficking victims. 2000 posters advertising the hotline were posted in local bus stations, 5000 leaflets were distributed to at-risk populations, radio spots advertising the hotline were

broadcast during the year, and a series of T.V. spots kicked off the hotline on Slovakia's three main television networks in June 2008.

The GOS continued to make an effort to identify and help current and potential victims by making available to police, border guards, municipal workers, and NGOs brochures about trafficking. The brochures were written in 9 languages (English, Vietnamese, Russian, Roma, Moldovan, Ukrainian, Polish, Hungarian, and Slovak). The brochure asks specific questions such as, "Are you being forced to work as a prostitute?"; "Are you being forced to work in a household or elsewhere?"; "Do they threaten you with violence?"; "Are they threatening your relatives?"; and, "Did they promise you something different?". The brochures, which were distributed in areas where potential victims might be found, contain the hotline telephone number.

1B. MONITORING OF BORDERS

The MOI has strengthened border protection mechanisms and improved cross-border cooperation; Slovakia has been part of the Schengen zone since December 2007, and foreign law enforcement officials have reported that Slovakia's border security is the envy of many neighbors. However, Slovakia continues to be a transit country for illegal migrant smuggling to Western Europe. During 2008, 103 persons were convicted of human smuggling; 24 were given prison sentences of 3-84 months, and 67 were given suspended sentences of 2-60 months.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) believes that the majority of smuggled or trafficked persons that have claimed asylum in Slovakia "disappear" by terminating their asylum cases after being registered at reception and refugee facilities. Slovakia has made progress in deterring illegal migration across its borders: in the past year, the number of new asylum cases decreased by nearly fifty percent. The number of asylum cases granted remains below one percent.

UNHCR reported that better implementation in recent years of Slovakia's Readmission Treaty with Ukraine has reduced the number of

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migrants in Slovakia. An agreement among the GOS, NGOs and UNHCR allows NGOs to monitor the border situation to ensure that asylum seekers are not sent back to their country of origin. The Ministry of Labor funds a facility for unaccompanied minors.

NGOs, UNHCR and IOM also continue to conduct police training and have cooperated with border police to identify potential trafficking victims among migrant populations. This cooperation with police has increased and is generally positive, according to NGO representatives. IOM reported that the government approved funding for additional training for border police in 2009.

1C. INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

The National Coordinator at the MOI is the point for inter-governmental coordination on trafficking. Within his office, he has designated the Director of the Department of Security Strategies to be the working-level point of contact. The National Coordinator convened the high-level Expert Group again in December 2008, and invited the U.S. Embassy to participate. The group is designed to have the political weight to enforce measures to combat TIP. The Expert Group includes Directors and State Secretaries from the Ministries of the Interior, Justice, Labor, Finance, Health, and Foreign Affairs, as well as, the office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the General Prosecutor, five NGOs, IOM, and UNODC.

1D. NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

The National Program contains a National Action Plan for the fight against trafficking in persons. The plan calls for the establishment of an increased network of victim support services (specifically regarding legal, psychiatric, medical, and social assistance), the creation of repatriation protocols for Slovak victims identified abroad, and increased media and youth outreach campaigns.

The agency responsible for its development is the MOI, in cooperation with other relevant ministries. The MOI invited NGOs to participate in the December 2008 Expert Group meeting, to contribute their perspective on the implementation of the National Program and Action Plan, as well as logical next steps in coming years. We observed that the dialogue was respectful and that the NGO comments were valued by the GOS, and included in the reports.

E. REDUCING DEMAND FOR COMMERCIAL SEX ACTS

Part of the training provided by the MOI and NGOs under the National Program educated key interlocutors from municipal offices, schools, and law enforcement about TIP and the criminal consequences of participation in illegal commercial sex acts. Participants in these trainings were provided with additional materials to distribute in their communities, to raise awareness about the role of consumers in perpetuating the illegal sex trade. However, Slovakia is not considered a destination country for TIP victims.

F. MEASURES TO REDUCE PARTICIPATION IN CHILD SEX TOURISM

The Anti-Trafficking Unit of the police did not report any cases of Slovak nationals who had traveled abroad for child sex tourism during the reporting period. However, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, TIP trainings do include an explanation of the Palermo protocol and the domestic penal code's instruments to prosecute traffickers.

G. MEASURES TO ENSURE PEACEKEEPERS DEPLOYED ABROAD DO NOT ENGAGE IN TIP-RELATED ACTIVITIES

The National Program provided anti-TIP training for government personnel stationed abroad. This training focused on the consequences of participation in illegal commercial sex acts. The MOI and Ministry of Defense are responsible for the training, which is also incorporated into police and military personnel basic training.

EDDINS